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SUMMER TREATS...
COMMUNITY CELEBRATED AT ANNUAL STRAWBERRY SOCIAL

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PHOTO OF HEIDI AND GWEN BECKER ENJOYING THEIR STRAWBERRY SUNDAES BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

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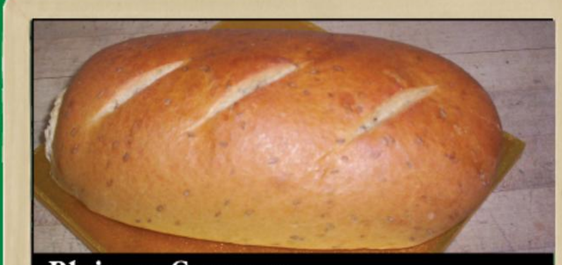

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Three Oaks Village Council receives update on sidewalk improvements

BY FRANCESA SAGALA

Members of the Three Oaks Village Council received an update on sidewalk improvements at their Wednesday, July 10, meeting.

Andrew Rudd, a civil engineer from Wightman and Associates, said a map was created based on sidewalk assessments that were done by the Southwest Michigan Planning Commission a few years ago.

"We use this map to try to start what is probably the most important step: Picking locations for improvements," he said.

The village was split into quadrants, with locations being picked from various spots throughout the village: the north zone, southwest zone and southeast zone. Rudd said that work will be done on the sidewalks from the center of the village moving out. The areas, with the corresponding cost estimates, are as follows: alternate one, Cherry Street, with an estimated construction cost of $150,000; alternate two, Oak Street, $173,000; Locust Street, $62,000 and Magnolia Street, $170,000.

Rudd said it's being proposed that each area be bid as its "own, unique section," while still being under the same contract.

Rudd said field work will be completed and the project was scheduled to be bid out by the end of this week. Currently, it's written that the work be done by Nov. 15; however, Rudd said it's being recommended that the village allow the work to continue into next June.

Council members approved the adoption of a sewer bond ordinance and a resolution to award the construction contract for wastewater system improvements in the amount of $2,456,667.50 to Oselka Constructors, contingent on the finalization of project funds.

Rudd said that they also received a bid from HRP Construction, with Oselka being the low one.

The total project and construction cost is $2,775,776.50, which is higher than the original estimated project cost. It's being recommended that the village "forgo" some past planning cost reimbursement of around $233,000, which was the cost of the ACO and its associated reports. EGLE has also offered additional funding of $391,000 in bond funds at the same 2 percent interest rate.

"That gets us up to the maximum bond amount of $2.75 million," he said, adding that about $26,000 in cash would be needed to "get up to the $2.775 number."

Due to the currently higher bond amount, Jeff Rowe, from Baker Tilly, said that a rate analysis of the budget revealed the 30-year term through the SRF loan program would be best for the village because, despite the rate study showing a "marginal increase per year," the increase wouldn't be required if the village did a 30-year term as opposed to the 20-year one. Through the SRF program, the state views revenues the village collects from the revenue sharing from the state as a backup to the user fees and the revenues that are generated have to be "at least one and a half times your annual debt service that you're paying per year."

"If we're looking at a 20 year, we wouldn't be able to meet that one and a half coverage level - with a 30 year, we're just slightly over," Rowe said.

Council members approved merit raises for the police department.

Village president Richard Smith said that there's three levels, with one being $25.96 hourly. He's asking that the council raise that to $28 hourly, which would go to $29.98, and that the chief's salary would be raised to $72,000.

He added that he's received written confirmation that the township will not be renewing its intergovernmental agreement with regards to police services with the village. As a result, the village will be losing about $80,000 a year as revenue from the General Fund.

Councilmembers approved the addition of $1 an hour pay increase for Matt Lindsey, maintenance worker in the water and sewer department who has received his L-1 lagoon license from the state, and that it be retroactive to when he earned his letter, which was June 13.

The resignation letter, effective July 26, of village clerk Theresa Smultz was accepted.

"Through a number of applicants we interviewed we found her to be the most qualified candidate for the position of our next village clerk," Smith said.

Smith said that he, Becky Tomas and Joe Hinman sat down with village manager Dan Falkner to go over his yearly review, with Faulkner receiving a score of 3.4 (on a scale of 1-5).

Council members approved an ordinance amendment, with the addition of property known as 23 West Ash.

The universe eats the wicked from the inside, over time their character sets on their face.
— Dino N. Fatouros

Local Government Meetings

New Buffalo Times

Democracy Requires Transparency

CITY OF NEW BUFFALO
JOHN HUMPHREY, MAYOR
CITY COUNCIL
MARK ROBERTSON, ROGER LIJEWSKI, JOHN HUMPHREY, BRIAN FLANAGAN, VANCE PRICE
City Council meets on the 3rd Monday of each month at 6:30PM
CITY OF NEW BUFFALO PLANNING COMMISSION MEETINGS
Meets on the 1st Tuesday of each month at 5:30PM
NEW BUFFALO TOWNSHIP BOARD
PETE RAHM, MICHELLE HEIT, MICHELLE HANNON, PATTY IAZZETTO, JACK ROGERS
Board meets on the 3rd Monday of each month at 4PM
NEW BUFFALO TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
Meets on the 1st Tuesday of each month at 6:30PM
SHERIFF BERRIEN COUNTY
Sheriff, Chuck Heit
Undersheriff, Greg Sanders
NEW BUFFALO AREA RECREATIONAL AUTHORITY
Meets at 10AM on the 2nd Wednesday of every other month (odd) at New Buffalo Township Hall, 17425 Red Arrow Highway New Buffalo
NEW BUFFALO AREA SCHOOLS BOARD
LISA WERNER, JOHN HASKINS, DENISE CHURCHILL, BRADLEY BURNER, VANESSA THUN, STEPHEN DONNELLY, GREG VOSBERG
CHIKAMING TOWNSHIP
CHIKAMING TOWNSHIP BOARD
DAVID BUNTE, PAULA DUDIAK, LIZ RETTIG, RICHARD SULLIVAN, BILL MARSKE
Chikaming Board meets on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 6:30PM
CHIKAMING TOWNSHIP PLANNING COMMISSION
Meets on the 1st Wednesday of each month at 6:30PM
THREE OAKS
THREE OAKS TOWNSHIP BOARD
Meets on the 2nd Monday of each month at 7PM

VILLAGE OF THREE OAKS BOARD
Meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 7PM
GRAND BEACH
Meets on the 3rd Wednesday October thru March at 5PM EST
KIMBERLY WOLNIK, CLERK-TREASURER
HARRY WALDER BLAKE O'HALLORAN, JAMES BRACEWELL, PETER DOERR, EDWARD BRANDES
MICHIANA
VILLAGE OF MICHIANA COUNCIL
Meets on the 2nd Friday of each month at 1PM

Petite Acres site plan ok'd

BY THERESE DONNELLY

Following the recommendation of the New Buffalo Planning Commission the New Buffalo City Council approved the site plan for Petite Acres, a proposed hotel and event space at 1109 E Buffalo Street.

Before the council voted on the matter at their July 15 meeting, property owners in the adjacent neighborhood, including Bell Avenue and Franklin Street, expressed concerns that the anticipated traffic would impact safety along the street and the additional use would overtax the sewer system.

Mayor John Humphrey explained that the site plan had been reviewed by professionals and meets all requirements for approval and the decision cannot be based on what may happen with the property. He added that Berrien County still needs to approve a stormwater management plan to proceed. Based on this, the council gave conditional approval.

Humphrey said City Manager Darwin Watson had provided the council members with a detailed memo regarding the site plan, and he would make the memo available to anyone who's interested.

The council tabled any action on two hawking and peddling permit applications, along with a discussion regarding the city's hawking and peddling policy. Humphrey explained that the council needs to update the relevant ordinance, which he said is currently "nebulous and grey" and does not address requests to peddle on private property.

In 2020, New Buffalo residents voted for a five-year city parks millage. That millage will expire in December 2025 and a continued millage depends on the approval of voters. During their June regular meeting, the council approved the language to use on the November 2024 ballot; however, at the July meeting, Watson explained the millage rates outlined in that motion were incorrect. He presented the council with the corrected language, which sets the millage rate at 0.4279 mills for five years, rather than the previously stated 0.4599.

Humphrey stated he was against the millage renewal because the city will need voters to approve a road millage in order to fund upcoming street improvement projects and he felt asking for that millage on top of the parks renewal will be too much for taxpayers. Without the road millage, he said the street project will be "dead in the water." He added that without the parks millage, the city parks will need a new funding source, which he said could be revisited depending on the result of the November ballot.

Council members Brian Flanagan, Mark Robertson and Roger Lijewski all voted in favor of the ballot wording. Council member Vance Price was absent.

After hearing from landlords at previous meetings, the council approved a revised fee schedule for long-term rental registration. Property owners with multiple units had pointed out that the previous fee schedule imposed excessive costs, which they had to pass on to tenants, making it more difficult for some to afford rent.

The new fees are set at $30 for an application or renewal, and $25 for each additional unit in a multi-unit structure, a $60 biennial inspection fee, with $30 per each additional unit and a $60 missed inspection fee. There are additional fees for renewal of an expired license.

In recent years, the city has leased the lot on the southeast corner of Whittaker and Buffalo streets from Seville Investments LLC to provide public parking. Seville has recently sold the lot to 2 East Buffalo LLC, which has offered the city a one-year lease for $19,000. Humphrey stated providing public parking on the lot does not significantly benefit city residents. He suggested if downtown businesses find the parking beneficial, they may want to consider joining together in a lease agreement with 1 East Buffalo.

Humphrey said the city was previously in discussions to purchase the lot from Seville, but the sale fell through.

The council voted to decline the lease offer.

Two candidates on the November ballot introduced themselves to the council at the meeting. Jacob Vravis, a long-time city resident, is running for city council. A Western Michigan University graduate, Vravis said he wants to help residents.

Berrien County Treasurer Shelly Weich is seeking reelection. Weich served as deputy treasurer for 10 years before being appointed to the treasurer position in 2020.

State Rep. Joey Andrews (D, HD-38) also addressed the council, giving an update on recent budget and legislative news. Andrews said funding needed to restart Palisades nuclear power plant in Bridgman has been secured, creating hundreds of jobs. Having closed in 2022, it will be the first plant in the country to be ever recommissioned.

He also reported the state legislature has established a trust fund to secure revenue sharing funds in the event of an economic downturn.

Between men and women there is no friendship possible. There is passion, enmity, worship, love, but no friendship. *— Oscar Wilde*

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JOURNEYMAN
THREE OAKS MICHIGAN

Chikaming Township Board tables decision on Chikaming Elementary School rezoning request

BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

A request to rezone property where the former Chikaming Elementary School sits to make way for housing was tabled, with a possible future special meeting gaining input from the public, at the Chikaming Township Board of Trustees' Thursday, July 11, meeting.

Applicant Three Harbert LLC is requesting that 13742 Three Oaks Road be rezoned from R-2 to R-3, which would allow for the former school building to be renovated to a 19-unit apartment building.

Trustee Bill Marske, who serves on the Planning Commission, said the planners had approved the request at their meeting the previous night contingent upon the applicant going to the zoning board of appeals, as two of the units are undersized and would need a square foot variance.

Marske said he believes the developer also bought the property next to it; however, only the current footprint of the elementary school would be rezoned to R-3 and the portion to the west would remain R-2.

During the previous night's public hearing, one person had been for the development, while four or five had been against it. Marske said that the concerns were mainly due to potential traffic and not usage.

Each of the two or one-bedroom units would have an entrance off the outside of the building, so there'd be no connecting doors inside.

There would also be new landscaping, and the spot where the dumpster is located would remain. A sidewalk would serve as a buffer between the bushes and the building itself.

The gymnasium would be left as an empty space at this time, Marske said.

Cars would only be able to exit off Three Oaks Road, although Marske added that cars wouldn't be able to enter the development there.

Three or four of the units would be rented to some of Granor Farm's employees.

Chikaming Township Supervisor David Bunte said that the lack of housing for the area's workforce has been discussed for a while.

"We have aggressively been trying to locate any parcels that can accommodate some type of workforce housing in the township that has infrastructure - because that's where we're challenged," he said.

Trustee Rich Sullivan said that the township does need to have something for people in the workforce as well as those who are employed with their fire and police departments.

He said getting more public input is essential, though.

"Based on the letters and emails we received since that meeting (the previous night), I think that's pretty clear... Maybe we as a group need to make sure we know where we as a community would like R-3 housing and why they might like it there and why they might not, not that would be the defining thing of our decision," he said.

Treasurer Liz Rettig said that they've only received a few letters that day and would like more public input.

"To me, it's far enough where it's away from density - I think it's a great location for many different uses, including this particular thing," she said.

Township attorney Charles Hilmer said that, under the Zoning Enabling Act, the board has the authority to hold its own public hearing on it.

Bunte said they could look into having a special meeting that would go over the site and have more of a "dialogue' between the public and the developer.

A request for a memorial rock and plaque for Kirk Schrader, a longtime sexton, in Lakeside Cemetery was approved, with the location to be determined. Bunte said the memorial would be paid for and wouldn't be a township expense.

A request from the River Valley Garden Club for a memorial rock and plaque honoring the Blue Star Memorial Byway, which would be in Harbert Community Park and paid for by the club, was approved.

Board members approved two resolutions approving grant applications with regards to the future Kohn Park in Sawyer: a $150,000 National Endowment for the Arts Grant, with a $150,000 match (Bunte said the match may also entail any donations) and a $30,000 Michigan Arts and Culture Council Experience Support Grant, with a $7,500 match.

A legal services agreement and conflict waiver for special counsel engagement for a possible joint fire authority was approved, which Bunte said is needed to move to the next phase of putting together potential policies and providing structure.

Board members approved a policy and notice of nondiscrimination for federal grant applications.

'The Bridges of Madison County' to open at Dunes Summer Theatre next Friday

Opening Friday, July 26, award-winning musical "Bridges of Madison County," set in 1964 in Iowa and Italy, is based on the celebrated novel and film. Detailing the romance between a dashing photographer and an unhappy Iowa farm wife, its "blissfully beautiful score...stays with you after the last lovely notes fade." (New York Daily News)

Directed by Steve Scott with music direction by Andrew Flasch and set design by Michael Lasswell, "Bridges of Madison County" features Max DeTogne as Robert and Kristianna Dilworth as Francesca. Dunes Summer Theatre's production promises to be a highlight of the season with a cast of 10 singers and an eight-piece orchestra.

"I've been in love with this show for a number of years now, and I'm thrilled to be able to bring it to Dunes' audiences," Scott said. "It's by now a romantic icon in our culture and is one the most ambitious productions that the Dunes has done in years. I think our patrons are going to love it as much as I do, and we have a dream cast to bring it to life."

Showtimes are 7 p.m. CST (8 p.m. EST) Fridays and Saturdays and 2 p.m. CST (3 p.m. EST) on Sundays. Bar and concessions open one hour prior to curtain. All shows take place at Dunes Summer Theatre at 288 Shady Oak Drive in Michigan City. Tickets ($35 each, $25 four or more) can be purchased at dunesARTS.org

Preview night, which is Thursday, July 25, is $15. There will be an opening night reception Friday, July 26, at 9:30 p.m. CST (10:30 p.m. EST) to meet the cast, director and production team ($20 entry or free for ticket season holders and donors over $150). Meals prepared by Cook Street Café will also be available for purchase 48 hours before curtain. Menu and purchase options available online. — STAFF REPORTS

La Porte considering more costly water and sewer upgrades

BY STAN MADDUX

Another bite could be taken from the estimated $100 million in upgrades needed for La Porte's water and sewer systems that date back a century.

A proposal to borrow $30 million for additional improvements to municipal water and sewer infrastructure was presented Monday night to the La Porte City Council.

No action was taken but a vote is expected at the next city council meeting on Aug. 5.

Currently, work like separating combined storm water and sewer lines on the letter and number streets to eliminate flooded basements and streets is nearing completion from a $25 million bond issue approved in 2020.

A near 30 percent increase in water and sewer rates is being used to finance those borrowed funds over a 20 year period.

Mayor Tom Dermody said another rate increase would be needed to finance the next series of proposed improvements but the need is too great to further ignore especially for residents that have longstanding problems with poor drainage.

"You see the back-ups. Their basements ruined. Other issues. To kick this down the road is not fair. Our residents deserve the best updated infrastructure available," he said.

Waste Water Department Superintendent Jerry Jackson said how much water and sewer rates would go up has not been determined.

Jackson said a rate increase might not be needed for a couple of years, though, if interest rates drop before the borrowed funds are secured and the city is in a position to pay more toward the principal early in the financing period.

"It depends on what the interest rates are doing," he said.

Jackson said the brunt of the work planned involves replacing what's mostly a 24 inch diameter line carrying sewage and storm water on Indiana Ave. from Lincolnway to Kingsbury Ave. with a 78 inch diameter line for storm water and an up to 12 inch diameter line for sewage.

He said the storm water line would be large enough to help with drainage on some of the adjacent streets feeding into the system after the combined lines in those neighborhoods are separated.

"It's a dramatic improvement," he said.

New water mains are also planned on Indiana Ave.

The remainder of the work planned at the waste water treatment plant involves replacing filtration and other equipment in the cleansing process used since 1987.

Jackson said the work on Indiana Ave. will take about two years to complete and comes at a significant savings for the city.

The Indiana Department of Transportation is scheduled to begin tearing out the pavement on Indiana Ave. next spring for a state funded reconstruction of the road also known as U.S. 35.

The city would strictly pay for installing the new below ground level infrastructure before the new asphalt traveling surface is laid.

Currently, the minimum water and sewer bill for a residential customer in the city based on usage is about $73 a month.

Dermody said the rates here are still very competitive to what's charged in other communities and will be at about the state average if raised again to fund the next round of work planned.

"This is a continuation of work that has to be done," he said.

Jackson said the $100 million in upgrades necessary is probably much more now because of inflation since the cost was estimated several years ago.

La Porte eyes restrictions on smoke and vape stores

BY STAN MADDUX

La Porte officials are looking to discourage the opening of additional smoke and vape shops they feel already exist here in great enough numbers.

The city council Monday, July 15, was presented with a measure that requires any new smoke and vape shops received approval from the city's Board of Zoning Appeals before opening.

The proposal also requires smoke and vape shops from being within 1,000 feet of a school and other places where children traditionally gather.

Currently, Mayor Tom Dermody said those establishments can set up shop anywhere in retail areas of the city without having to seek permission from a local governing body.

He said the use of such products by minors, in particular, is a problem nationwide.

"We know what's happening with underage vaping and how accessible and available this is and we need to do our part," he said.

Councilwoman Lauren Huffman, who submitted the proposal, cited figures from the Centers for Disease Control showing 2.1 million middle school children vape nationwide to illustrate her support for the measure.

She believes fewer children will take up smoking and vaping if they're not influenced as much by their presence in the community.

Huffman said there have also been issues with vape products being sold locally to minors despite state law prohibiting the sale of such products to anyone under 18.

"I'm on board," she said.

The council is expected to vote on the measure at its next meeting on August 5.

Huffman said another reason she took the lead on the proposal was to keep such establishments from opening downtown.

She said smoke and vape stores are not a good mix for the family type atmosphere preferred to attract more people into downtown.

"I want to make sure that all of the stores, shops, retailers in that area cater to families and anything unhealthy like smoking, vaping is kind of away from where families gather," she said.

Dermody said he also believes limiting the number of such establishments could help further move the needle toward a healthier community.

For years, La Porte has consistently ranked toward the bottom statewide for the health of its residents based on factors like smoking and obesity rates.

"Anybody that would like to debate the issue of our lack of health, which is slowly improving, can go to the Health Foundation of La Porte to look at those numbers," he said.

HFL contributes funding to projects like construction of trails and other forms of recreation in hopes of meeting its goal of La Porte being among the healthiest communities in Indiana by 2030.

"We're not stopping any vape or smoke retailers from coming and opening a business in La Porte. It's just giving an extra look to see if it's an appropriate site for them to open up shop," she said.

New Buffalo Times
LOCAL INTELLIGENCE
— SINCE 1942 —

Deniza's Joint offering old-fashioned hot dogs and more in New Buffalo

BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

Deniza Weisenritter (with a bear that Deniza and late wife Isabella used to bring to children's hospitals) with chef Chris Comb

Deniza Weisenritter has always had a "soft spot" for hot dog joints.

"My late wife, Isabella, on our first date, I took her to a hot dog stand in Chicago - I was so cheap, I just got her fries and a pop," Deniza said, adding that the marriage lasted for 30 years.

Upon first arriving from Chicago 23 years ago, Deniza and Isabella opened a hot dog place along Red Arrow Highway in Sawyer.

Now, Deniza has taken on a new hot dog venture in New Buffalo: Deniza's Joint, located at 800 W, Buffalo Street.

Deniza has a "five-year commitment" to the area, as that's how long the building will be leased. Having an affordable place to buy an old-fashioned hot dog and other items is important.

Chris Comb, the professional cook at Deniza's Joint, is onboard this mission.

"He believes in my mission and what I wanted to do for the community and he's stuck with me," Deniza said.

The restaurant's name harkens back to places, which satisfied people's craving for "munchies," that Deniza used to frequent.

"Where I came from in Chicago, you called a good restaurant a joint - 'I'm going to get some munchies from this hot dog place down the block,'" Deniza said.

Highlights on the menu include the FIP (Fabulous Illinois Persons) dog, which is a Chicago dog, as well as the Detroit Coney Island Dog. There's the Father Edward J. Cronin Dog, which was named after a friend of Deniza's who recently passed away.

"He used to come everyday before we opened - 'I want a Chicago dog' - 'Not ready yet, Father, we're still cleaning up…' He always told me he's going to have the first hot dog," Deniza said, adding that the first hot dog was left outside to "let nature get it because that's his dog."

Customers can also find Italian sausage and brats, homemade chili and soup. There're also burgers, sandwiches, dinners, such as ocean perch, a variety of sides and drinks. Deniza said the egg sandwiches made by Comb on the breakfast menu have really "taken off."

Having spent 30 years in the restaurant business, Comb said he began as a chef in New Orleans before moving to Indiana and finding his way to this area.

Comb said everything on the menu is "freshly made," from the barbecue sauce to the chili and soups.

"I want to do a special every day outside of our standard menu - to create a different special and create different lunches," he said.

An openly transgender person, Deniza has been pleased with the community's acceptance so far.

Making customers also feel accepted and appreciated is Deniza's goal as well.

"I'll get married about 20 times a day to women in here…I've even had a few guys propose to me, I've married a few guys in here but you know, it puts a smile on their face - if I see someone that's down, I pick them up, it's just my nature," Deniza said.

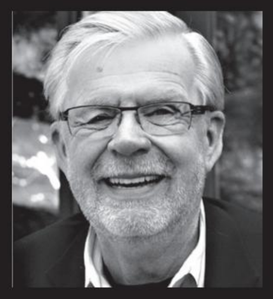
"My reviews and the ways people talk about me online, I think I've had a very good, successful run so far and I want to build it."

Deniza's Joint will be open year round, seven days a week. Current hours are from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m Sundays (with breakfast being served from 9 a.m. to noon); 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday and Tuesday (breakfast from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m.); 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Wednesday (breakfast from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m.); 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Thursday (breakfast from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m.) and 8 a.m. to 1 a.m. Friday and Saturday (breakfast from 8-11 a.m.).

SPORTS

From the Bleachers

COLUMN BY KURT MARGGRAF IN CHICAGO



Last week, I said that there wouldn't be many columns about baseball this summer because our local teams were playing so poorly.

Well, since last week, the White Sox continued to stumble, winning only once and losing five times. The Tigers and Cubs played top notch competition, but each team managed to win five times and lose only twice. The Cubs are only three and a half games out of a wild card berth and the Tigers only seven, but the White Sox have now fallen 27.5 games out.

The All-Star break couldn't have come at a better time.

The next few weeks should tell a lot about this season and next, as every team will have to make a decision as to whether they will attempt to make the playoffs this year, or trade some of their veteran players for younger ones and try again next year.

Things got started Sunday night with the MLB draft.

The White Sox drafted a left-handed pitcher and the Cubs gained a third baseman, while the Tigers chose a high school shortstop.

Good luck young men, hope you can be part of a bright future for your respective teams.

I took some time earlier this week to watch a few episodes of 'Welcome to Wrexham', the FX docuseries now in its' third season. For those who haven't followed the series, I highly recommend you do so.

The series follows Candadian actor Ryan Reynolds and American actor Rob McElhenney, two acquaintances that decided to buy Wales' A.F.C. Wrexham's football (soccer) team.

I don't want to give away too much, but Reynolds and McElhenney are exceptional owners.

They care about the players, the team, the coaches, the stadium, and the fans, who are really diehard.

When the series starts, the team is really struggling, and if it didn't improve, they faced the possibility of dropping down a tier. The team is the third oldest in the world, so the fans have parents and grandparents who cheered for them. We learn about the town, the country, the team, the stadium, the sport, the passion, and all of the other emotions that go with being a fan. I highly recommend it.

Finally, it's almost impossible to believe, but the NFL preseason begins in a couple of weeks.

The Bears wouldn't be the Bears if there wasn't some drama to go along with the start of the season.

Both of their prize draft choices, Caleb Williams and Rome Odunze, have yet to sign their rookie contracts [they have, as o fpress date].

I am a big fan of the Bears GM Ryan Poles, but with training camp less than a week away, it's time to settle on contracts for the two new future stars. August 1, the date of the Bears first preseason game, is just around the corner. What an exciting year it promises to be.

Dale Dayton said "Nine-tenths of wisdom is appreciation. Go find somebody's hand and squeeze it, while there's time."

Be kind. Talk to you next week. Peace, love, and happiness.

Personal beauty is a greater recommendation than any letter of reference. *— Aristotle*

Homicide suspect from Indiana apprehended in New Buffalo

A homicide suspect was apprehended on North Thompson Street near East Buffalo Street in New Buffalo thanks to the use of license plate reader cameras (LPRs).

According to a press release made by Lt. Ryan Sullivan, at 8:18 p.m. Saturday, July 13, Deputy Micah Carlson with the Berrien County Sheriff's Office – New Buffalo Township Patrol located and apprehended a homicide suspect, a 48-year-old female wanted out of Northwest Indiana.

Per the release, the "seemingly routine piece of police work was made possible by the utilization of modern technology, along with traditional law enforcement techniques."

"Throughout the history of law enforcement, peace officers have struggled to efficiently share information regarding wanted suspects and their associated criminal activity. This struggle has been especially pronounced for law enforcement agencies along state lines. In response to this challenge, the Berrien County Sheriff's Office, like numerous other law enforcement agencies across the country, has partnered with local communities and businesses to purchase and maintain license plate reader cameras along public roadways," it further stated.

Known as LPRs, the readers passively monitor vehicles, and will notify patrol deputies if a stolen vehicle or wanted individual is observed.

"As in Deputy Carlson's case, this timely information allows deputies to respond promptly, locate and apprehend wanted individuals, and help adjudicate criminal cases. Good law enforcement begins with civically minded peace officers who know their communities, and work to serve and protect their fellow neighbors. However, modern technology, such as LPRs, has provided a notable supplement to the law enforcement community, and Berrien County as a whole," the release said.

"Timely apprehension of wanted individuals provides timely justice to victims of crime. Furthermore, the efficient transfer of information between law enforcement agencies enhances the safety of the men and women in law enforcement," it said.

Agencies involved were the Berrien County Sheriff's Office – New Buffalo Township Patrol Berrien County Sheriff's Office – Road Patrol Pokagon Tribal Police Department and New Buffalo Police Department. — **STAFF REPORTS**

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New Buffalo alumna named to Michigan State Athletics Hall of Fame

Beth (Rohl) Saylors, a New Buffalo High School alumna, is among six individuals and a trailblazing pair of teams who have been included in the 2024 Class for the Michigan State Athletics Hall of Fame

Saylors graduated from Michigan State in 2013 as the most decorated female thrower in school history.

"I knew he (Michigan State Vice President and Director of Athletics Alan Haller) was looking for me and I had no idea what it was in regard to," said Saylors. "And when he told me, I was just completely in shock at the time, and I could not believe it. It's something I never expected. That is an amazing honor for anyone to achieve, and to find out that you're achieving that was a big shock. Very exciting, but definitely a big shock."

Saylors won the shot-put state title as a senior at New Buffalo High School in 2008 and joined the MSU track and field team as a walk-on that fall. She credits her high school coach, Lisa Knoll, for getting her into the sport.

At the 2009 Big Ten Indoor Championships, she won her first conference title as true freshman in the weight throw.

Saylors was awarded Big Ten Indoor Freshman of the Year honors that season and became the first Spartan since 1991 to be named Big Ten Freshman of the Year. She was also named to the All-Big Ten First Team, becoming the first freshman in school history to earn All-Big Ten indoor honors. Later that year, Saylors competed at the 2009 Pan American Junior Championships and was the top American finisher with a third-place effort in the hammer throw.

Saylors qualified for her first NCAA Championships during the 2010 outdoor season and qualified for each remaining NCAA meet for the rest of her collegiate career. She earned seven First Team All-America honors, three in the weight throw and four in the discus. Her best finishes came during her senior year, where she earned silver in the weight throw during the 2013 indoor season and bronze in the discus during the outdoor season.

Along the way, Saylors went on to win four more Big Ten titles – one indoor, the 2013 weight throw, and three outdoor, the 2011 discus and hammer throw titles and the 2013 discus title. She was named the Big Ten Field Athlete of the Year twice, once during the 2011 outdoor season, where she was also named the Big Ten Outdoor Field Athlete of the Championships, and once during the 2013 indoor season. She also represented the Spartans at the 2012 Olympic Trials in the discus, placing seventh, and at the 2013 USA Outdoor Championships in the discus where she finished fourth to earn an alternate spot at the 2013 IAAF World Championships.

She finished her collegiate career with three school records - 59.78m in the discus, 62.87m in the hammer throw, and 22.31m in the weight throw. Her 59.78m mark in the discus was a then-Big Ten record, while her 22.31m weight throw mark still stands as the school record today.

After graduating from MSU in 2013, Saylors trained at the Olympic Training Center in Chula Vista, California, for a year before moving to Camp Verde, Arizona, where she currently lives with her husband and three young children. Now, she stays at home with her three children, Evan (8), Magnolia (3) and Hank (2).

The Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony and Celebration will take place Friday, Sept. 13.

For a complete list of inductees, visit www.msuspartans.com. — STAFF REPORTS

Every day 'Rides Wristband Day' at next month's youth fair

A staple at the Berrien County Youth Fair has always been "Rides Wristband Days" during Fair week, where on certain days and times fairgoers can ride the rides unlimited for one price.

Again this year, "every day will be Rides Wristband Day," said executive director Karen Klug.

North American Midway Entertainment rides personnel oversee the rides at the fair each summer, and has partnered with the fair for a number of years to bring fairgoers day wristband days.

"The response continues to be overwhelming; it is such a good deal," Klug said.

Klug said that fairgoers enjoyed the rides' wristbands because they can be used throughout the day instead of a restricted time period, "which makes everybody happy because the prices are affordable and the times are flexible." She also said the lines are not as long because everyone is not trying to get on the rides at the same time.

During the fair, wristbands will be $32 each. A special sale promotion on wristbands is taking place through Aug. 9, where the price will be $27 per wristband at various Honor Credit Union locations and the BCYF office. This saves riders $5 per wristband.

"We are excited to partner with Honor Credit Union on this promotion to offer the discounted wristbands to people all over the county. That saves fairgoers money and makes it affordable for families. Buy as many as you want to use throughout the week," Klug said.

Wristband vouchers are available at the following Honor Credit Union locations: Baroda, Benton Harbor, Berrien Springs, Buchanan, Coloma, Decatur, Dowagiac, Niles, St. Joseph and Stevensville, as well as the BCYF office for a limited time. Riders will receive a wristband voucher to be used on any one day (Tuesday – Saturday) during the fair. The vouchers are exchanged for a wristband at the fair in the rides area. The minimum height requirement for all rides is 36 inches. Some rides may have additional height restrictions.

Fair dates are Aug. 12-17. The Fair's theme this year is "Explore Planet Fair." For more information, please contact the fair office at 269-473-4251. — STAFF REPORTS

Chesterton Art Center presents the 65th annual Chesterton Art Fair

The 65th Annual Chesterton Art Fair draws artists and art lovers from all over the Midwest and beyond who work in a wide variety of media including painting, glass, wood, leather, sculpture, jewelry, and more. Always the first full weekend in August, this year's dates are August 3 and 4, 2024, and fair hours are 10 AM to 5 PM on Saturday, and 10 AM to 4 PM on Sunday. Chesterton Art Fair is held in beautiful Dogwood Park, 1504 S 23rd St., in Chesterton, IN, a municipal park with plenty of shade trees and amenities. The Fair features 80+ artists, live music, local food vendors and free parking for the almost four thousand visitors that attend. For a complete listing of 2024 participating artists, visit chestertonart.org/chesterton-art-fair.

"The Chesterton Art Fair is an annual tradition bringing thousands together for a two-day celebration of the arts, and this year will be no exception. We have wonderful artists from all over the country," Chesterton Art Center Executive Director, Hannah Hammond-Hagman said, "We have artists joining us from across the Midwest, East Coast, Florida and California. Also, this year, all family activities will be offered at no charge, so join us for a beautiful weekend appreciating and creating art."

Entertainment begins at 10 AM each morning. On Saturday, August 3 you will hear Marco Villarreal, Billy Foster, and Patti Shaffner. On Sunday, August 4, the fun times continue with Alexis Bratsakis, Mike Owens, and Leann Stutler. Our range of delicious food vendors this year include Ben's Soft Pretzels, Dog Days Ice Cream Parlor, Tacos My Fren, Growing Girls Farm, St. Elizabeth's Orthodox Church, and Travelin' Toms Coffee of the Dunes. There is something for everyone!

Tickets for the Fair are $5 per person. Children 12 and under are free. You can purchase your tickets at the Chesterton Art Center, in advance on our website at chestertonart.org, or at the gate. Chesterton Art Fair is sponsored in part by Cleveland-Cliffs Foundation, Stuart + Benjamin Abelson Foundation Trust, John W. Anderson Foundation, Indiana Arts Commission, ATG Real Estate Development, Luella DeWulf,Chesterton Feed and Garden Center, SFC Gallery, Lakeshore Public Media, Service Sanitation, Duneland Kiwanis, Rotary Club of Chesterton-Porter, Wellsand Landscaping + Hardscaping, Family Express, and Chesterton Tribune.

Proceeds from the fair support Chesterton Art Center (CAC), a non-profit arts organization providing high-quality educational and outreach programs that serve hundreds of students of all ages, a calendarof exhibitions that showcases local and regional artists, and various community events and partnerships that bring the arts to the Duneland community and beyond.

The Chesterton Art Center is located at 115 S. 4th Street, in Chesterton, IN. They can be reached at 219-926-4711 or visiting www.chestertonart.org. — STAFF REPORTS

The Acorn Dramatic Arts Camp to present 'Alice In Wonderland'

The Acorn Center for the Performing Arts will present the final performance of "Alice in Wonderland," the second production of The Acorn Dramatic Arts Camp, at 7 p.m. Thursday, Aug. 1.

Tickets are free and are available at acornlive.org.

Step into the world of Wonderland as youth performers bring "Alice In Wonderland" to life as the culmination of the four-week summer camp. After Alice tumbles down a mysterious rabbit hole, she finds herself in a strange land where everyone is raving mad. With the help of a Cheshire Cat, an astute Caterpillar and a righteous Humpty Dumpty, Alice must find her way home and discover who she really is.

Campers range in age from 8-16 and come in with any theater experience level, where they are introduced to acting technique, dance, singing, backstage tech and set building. Each camper goes through an internal audition process,memorizing and perfecting the script, while prioritizing the discovery, refinement and execution of those skills.

"We are building this program with a mind to introduce and grow a love of musical theater to children and teens in the community who have no experience, and flourish musical theater as a passion for children and teens in the community who have already begun their exploration of musical theater. We believe that there is something for everybody to love about theater - whether that's the stage, set building, stage managing, backstage tech, or any other little detail that goes into a production," a press release from The Acorn said.

The Acorn is located at 107 Generations Drive in Three Oaks. — STAFF REPORTS

THE REGION OF THREE OAKS MUSEUM TO PRESENT 'THE SANDBURGS AND THE NISEI'

It's a little-known but fascinating chapter in local history— how two young Japanese-American detainees came to live in Harbert during World War II. They were brought out of detention camps by Carl & Paul Sandburg— he was America's most famous poet, she one of the country's best goat-breeders.

Museum Vice President Nick Bogert stumbled upon this unlikely saga of Sunao Imoto and Kaye Miyamoto by chance, and will present a Power Point program on the Sandburgs and the Nisei (American-born Japanese) at 6:30 p.m. on Friday, July 19.

The program will be held in the meeting room at Chikaming Township Hall, 13535 Red Arrow Highway, in Harbert.

Admission is $5 for museum members, $20 for non-members, (the $20 includes a museum membership). All proceeds will go to The Region of Three Oaks Museum, a 501 (c) (3) organization dedicated to preserving and presenting local history. — STAFF REPORTS

Campers design space-themed banners in the gym

Campers create stories about imaginary planets as part of a creative writing special

New Buffalo Day Camp is a summer tradition

BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

Happy campers have returned to the hallways of New Buffalo High School.

So have Emily Keller and Sophia Giannetti, co-directors of New Buffalo Day Camp, which runs until Aug. 2.

After taking over the camp last summer, the past campers, assistant and head counselors, as well as New Buffalo High School alumni, are helming this year's space-themed camp.

"We're more confident this year, since we have one more year under our belt," Giannetti, who will start her first year of teaching third grade at New Buffalo Elementary School this year, said.

This year, enrollment has increased to about 180 campers, with the daily average at about 130.

"Families are excited to be back, kids are excited to be back and counselors are excited to be back," Keller, who just completed her masters in international education in Madrid, Spain, said.

There are 11 head counselors this year, with 11 groups of campers. Keller said that children in grades kindergarten through seventh attend the camp. Each head counselor also gets two assistants - one in the morning and one in the afternoon.

There are also those who teach the "specials," such as art, cooking, creative writing and other activities, with an assistant for each special. Keller added that counselors rotate through specials as well.

In addition to the time that they spend at the high school, the campers troop over to New Buffalo Township Park to enjoy the splash pad twice a week. Last Friday, they took their first field trip to the carousel and splash pad in St. Joseph.

This year, campers are also creating pickleball paddles in the STEAM building located across from the school.

Giannetti said that parents look forward to the camp because, unlike other area camps, New Buffalo Day Camp runs from Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., for five weeks out of the summer.

The campers also anticipate its arrival.

"During the school year, they're asking for their counselors because they miss them already," Giannetti said.

Returning camper Fransisco Cardanes loves working off his energy at the camp.

"I like playing basketball and soccer - I like sports games and running around," he said.

Keller said those who work at the camp also play a role in its draw.

"Our staff brings a lot of good energy and gets them excited to be here, so that's the draw for sure for them to come back every day," she said.

Ella Hawblitzel, a resident of Long Beach, Indiana, teaches creative writing and serves as an assistant counselor in the afternoon. To correspond with this year's "space" theme, campers last week were designing their own planets, as well as writing the names, size and what lives on their plants.

An elementary education major whose mother substitutes at the school district, she said she's enjoyed her first year at the camp so far.

"I like to get to have a lot of freedom with the creativity and planning my lessons - all the kids so far are nice and, honestly, my favorite thing is working with kids and getting to spend time with them," she said.

Amber Lowry helps campers cook some pancakes

Campers work on an art project

Mother charged with overdose of toddler

BY STAN MADDUX

A $16,000 cash only bond has been set for a La Porte woman accused in the drug overdose of her 18 month old child.

Lily Mae Allen, 22, is charged in La Porte Circuit Court with Level 5 felony neglect of a dependent.

During her initial hearing on July 12, Judge Tom Alevizos set the bail amount and appointed a public defender to represent her against the allegations after ruling she is not able to afford private legal counsel.

According to court documents, emergency responders on July 9 found the toddler shaking, vomiting and experiencing irregular breathing in a home in the 300 block of Oberreich St. on the city's east side.

The child was taken to Northwest Health in La Porte and tested positive for methamphetamine, police said.

Police said the toddler was later released from the hospital and placed into the care of an Indiana Department of Child Services case worker.

Exactly how the methamphetamine wound up in the blood stream of the child was not revealed.

Police said Allen gave conflicting stories but one she told the most involved her leaving the child alone inside the home of a cousin on Roosevelt St. to step outside and smoke marijuana.

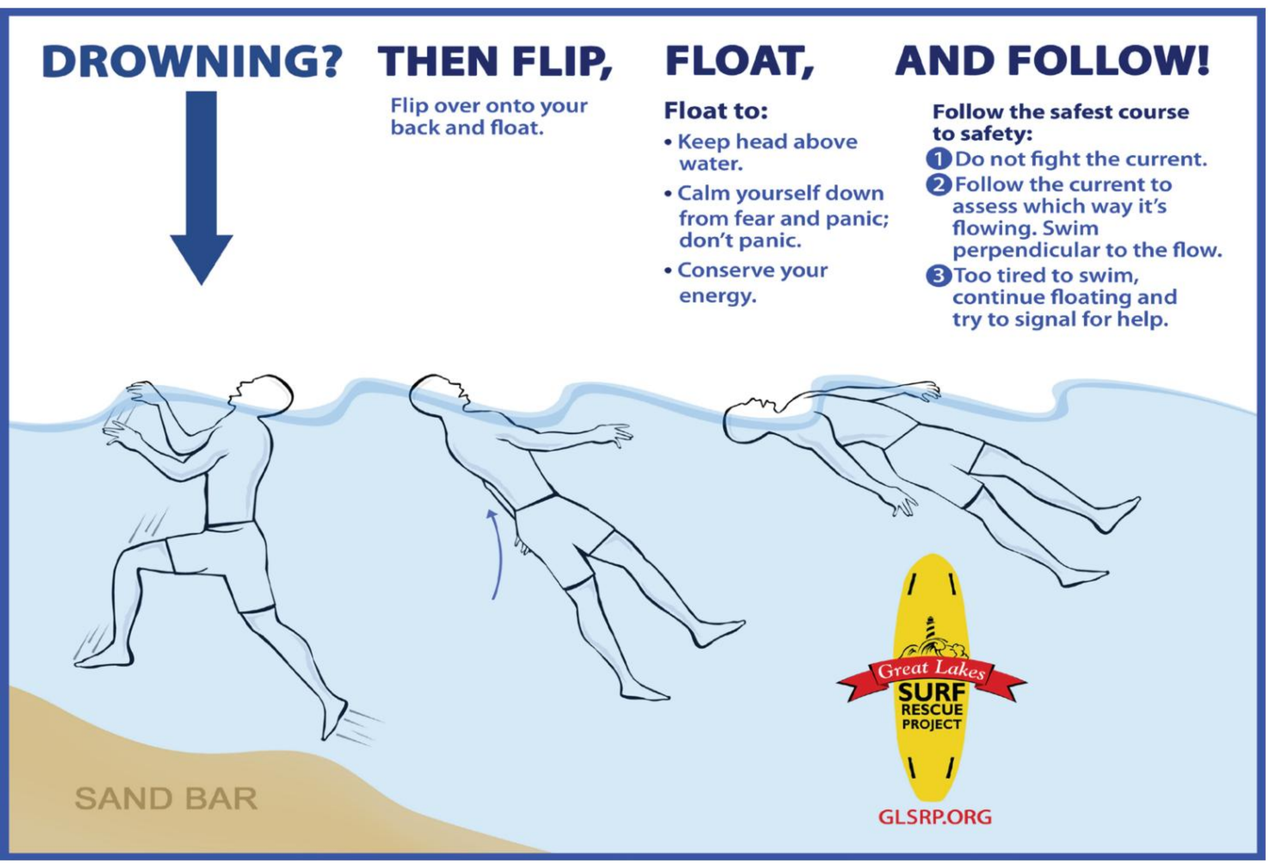
Later, Allen went to the home of a friend expressing concern about the well-being of the child who she described as "acting strange," according to court documents.

The investigation shows Allen left to get food thinking the child would be o.k. after having something to eat, police said.

However, she returned believing her child was overdosing on methamphetamine, court documents revealed.

Police said Allen called several people to try and have someone bring her a drug test for the child then called 911.

The La Porte woman could face anywhere from a one to six year sentence.


DROWNING?
THEN FLIP,
Flip over onto your back and float.
FLOAT,
Float to:
• Keep head above water.
• Calm yourself down from fear and panic; don't panic.
• Conserve your energy.
AND FOLLOW!
Follow the safest course to safety:
1 Do not fight the current.
2 Follow the current to assess which way it's flowing. Swim perpendicular to the flow.
3 Too tired to swim, continue floating and try to signal for help.
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Three people injured by runaway draft horse at fair

BY STAN MADDUX

A spooked draft horse running loose caused injuries to two children and an adult at the La Porte County Fair.

Fair Board President Steve Mrozinski said the adult was taken by medical helicopter after complaining of trouble breathing while the children were transported by ambulance to a hospital with what appeared to be minor injuries.

"It was a freak accident," he said.

The names of the injured people were not disclosed.

The July 11 accident happened a short distance from the draft horse arena on the northwest side of the fairgrounds along Indiana 2 just west of La Porte.

Initially, emergency responders were called on a report of people being trampled by the draft horse.

However, Mrozinski said there was no trampling.

He said the most seriously injured person was ejected from a riding cart pulled by another draft horse and run over by the cart.

Some of the children in 4-H accompanied by adults were in the arena showing their draft horses, which were pulling riding carts before judges in charge of the scoring.

Mrozinski said a draft horse outside the arena somehow got spooked and while running struck a cart pulled by another draft horse a short distance from the arena.

A second riding cart nearby was also struck.

Mrozinski said the three injured people were knocked out of their carts from the impact.

Mrozinski said additional details will be provided once the investigation of the accident is completed.

About 30 minutes after the accident, a meeting was called in the 4-H Draft Horse Club barn to discuss what happened with about 100 4-H youth and others involved in the activities.

Mrozinski said the main purpose was to ease concerns over what transpired and to resume the showing.

Jon Schultz said he was in the arena with a 4-H youth showing one of his draft horses.

Schultz, who lives just outside New Carlisle, said he didn't see what happened at the beginning but heard the commotion toward the end.

"A lot of people were yelling whoa, which is what you're going to say when you're trying to stop a horse," he said.

Aaron Coorman of South Bend was also in the arena with his draft horse being shown by a 4-H youth from La Porte County at the time of the accident.

Coorman said he heard people yelling and warning other people to get out of the way of the draft horse running loose.

He said there's always a risk when dealing with large animals like a draft horse, which can weigh as much as a ton or more.

"We're all trying to be safe out here and we're out here for the kids, so, it's not a good thing but accidents happen," he said.

Kelsey Guadarrama, a 4-H educator with the Purdue Cooperative Extension office in La Porte County, said the extension office has an insurance policy covering the medical expenses of any 4-H youth injured during a 4-H event.

"If they do need help or they do need extra insurance other than their own then we can provide that for them," she said.

HOROSCOPE

JULY 18-24, 2024

AS INTERPRETED BY SANDY "STAR" BENDT

ARIES MARCH 21—APRIL 19

It may be difficult for you to express your feelings with others this week. There are certain things you may not be ready to share or may worry if you do, they will be met with judgment. More than likely, you are being overly critical. But it's a good idea to separate business and pleasure for now.

TAURUS APRIL 20—MAY 20

Conversations with neighbors or old school chums will bring a lot of happiness and fond memories now. If you have painful memories, now is the time to get to the root of it and heal it. This is a powerful opportunity for change and reversals that free you in some way.

GEMINI MAY 21—JUNE 21

There is a need to get things accomplished or do your part in a collaborative project. The problem is, it may not be clear on who is paying for what or what the true intentions of the project are. Be sure to get money upfront before buying materials. Be cautious with money.

CANCER JUNE 22—JULY 22

It may be hard to focus on work this week because you will feel very much like taking the day off and relaxing on the beach or under a shade tree. There is a lot of energy focused on your sign now and you may need to step back from work and soak up the cosmic vibes.

LEO JULY 23—AUGUST 22

There is a very dreamy romantic vibe around you this week. The problem is, you would prefer to be alone with your thoughts. Generally, you're not overly empathic but this week your senses will be heightened and you will easily be blocked by any negative vibes.

VIRGO AUGUST 23—SEPTEMBER 22

You will be seeing a lot of old friends and people you went to school with this week. Use this opportunity to make amends and possibly reconnect and rekindle that friendship. The type of fun you have now may not be that different from what it was back in the day but at least it's legal now.

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23—OCTOBER 22

Your work environment will feel much happier and more productive this week. There will be a softening with management and because of this moral will be restored amongst the troops. On the home-front, it may be time to have a serious one to one with a partner. This too will improve.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 23—NOVEMBER 21

You'll be in one of those do everything modes. Which will make it hard to delegate duties. Don't spread yourself too thin here. Let other people do their part. Once you tell them what you need to be done, trust them to get it done. Take a break and let others pitch on now.

SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22—DECEMBER 21

You will be feeling quite nostalgic this week and may look back on previous relationships with regret or longing. Rather than letting it get you down, use this feeling to motivate you to make the most of your current relationship. If single, use it to get out and meet someone new.

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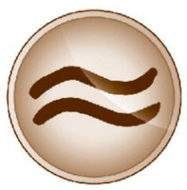
CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22—JANUARY 19

You will be feeling quite nostalgic this week and may look back on previous relationships with regret or longing. Rather than letting it get you down, use this feeling to motivate you to make the most of your current relationship. If single, use it to get out and meet someone new.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 20—FEBRUARY 18



You will experience some considerable restlessness this week, which will help you tie up some loose ends on projects at work. There is an opportunity to expand and reach a larger audience later this year but for now, stay focused on the job at hand and make that money!

PISCES FEBRUARY 19—MARCH 20

There is a very spunky, spontaneous vibe coming at you this week. Now is the time to make the most of the long summer days. Put in your eight hours and then hit the beach. If you can, start work early so you'll have more time for picnicking and watching the sunset.

Man is so made that when anything fires his soul, impossibilities vanish. — *Jean de La Fontaine*

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Sudoku

Fill in the grid so that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the numbers 1 through 9.

		2			7	8	4	1
	4	8	5					
8	3							
1								5
		5		9				
					5	2		
9			3			1		
	2	3			4		8	7

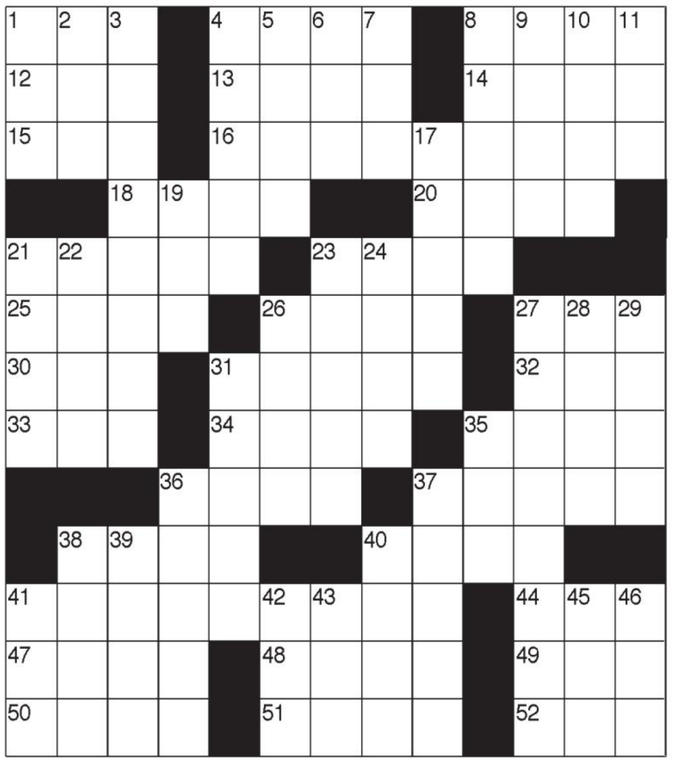
CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS

1 Pat
4 Tablespoon (abbr.)
8 Ironwood
12 Amer. Football League (abbr.)
13 Lower intestine
14 Caviar fish
15 British thermal unit (abbr.)
16 Skew (2 words)
18 Saga
20 Kernel (pref.)
21 Annoy
23 Atomic physicists
25 Another (Sp.)
26 Spotted cavy
27 Compass direction
30 Women's Army Corps (abbr.)
31 Serious
32 Equal opportunity employer (abbr.)
33 Ultimate degree
34 N.Z. bird
35 Buddhist female deity
36 Tough
37 Cordage fiber
38 Norwegian king
40 Loudness measure
41 Yon (2 words)
44 Amer. Automobile Assn. (abbr.)
47 Jump
48 Project
49 Mountain on Crete
50 Bond movie (2 words)
51 Dear (Fr.)
52 Eye-infesting worm

DOWN

1 Flap
2 Astern
3 Gr. author
4 Dominion
5 Unhappy
6 Brythonic sea god
7 Saint (Sp.)
8 Brazilian nutritious drink
9 Hand (pref.)
10 Female
11 Gelderland city
17 Mogul emperor
19 Jap. volcanic crater
21 Village
22 State (Fr.)
23 Fanatical
24 Scientific name (suf.)
26 Rain
27 Whelk (2 words)
28 Cold Adriatic wind
29 Wale
31 Bar
35 Uncle (Sp.)
36 Marx brother
37 Cut
38 Remaining
39 Cant
40 Kill (Scot.)
41 Hoary
42 This one (Lat.)
43 Anglo-Saxon letter
45 Bother
46 Antiaircraft artillery (abbr.)



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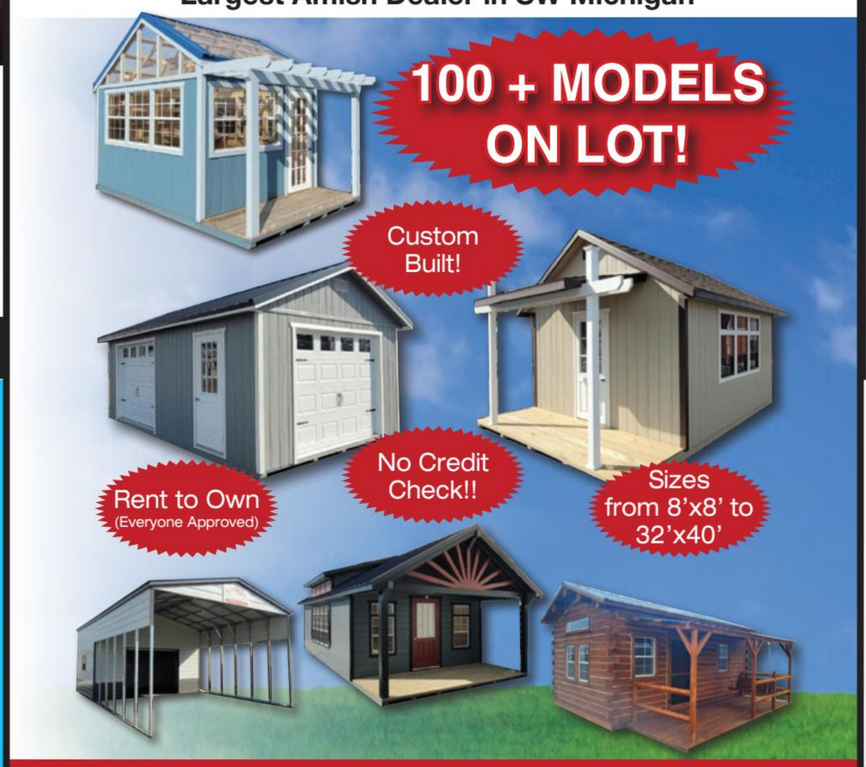

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Classic car collection lost to fire during power outage

BY STAN MADDUX

A La Porte County couple tried saving their antique vehicles but the electric overhead door on their burning pole barn wouldn't open because of a power outage from the strong Monday night storms.

"There was just no way of getting them out," said Nerva Kraus, who lives at 0231 W. 975 South just outside Kingsford Heights.

Kraus, 70, said she and her husband, Daniel, often took the five beloved vehicles parked in the pole barn to car shows and on cruises during the summer.

They owned one of the cars, a blue 1957 Chevy Bel Air, since 1986.

Kraus said they had all of the other vehicles, including a 1966 Dodge Coronet, for close to a decade or more.

"A lot of sentiment right there. It was quite devastating. They're like family," she said.

Mr. Kraus, 72, told investigators he went inside the pole barn Tuesday afternoon and started his generator to supply power to his home during the lingering outage, according to La Porte County Police.

The generator caught fire, though, before he could wheel it out of the 50 X 80 structure.

Police said flames from the generator caught one of the inside walls of the metal sided pole barn on fire.

Kraus ran out of the structure to grab a fire extinguisher and returned to find the flames spreading too rapidly, police said.

Mrs. Kraus said they went to open the overhead door of the pole barn to start driving the vehicles out of the structure but it wouldn't open.

It was at that moment their panicking minds realized there was no electricity to power the door.

They failed in their attempts to physically open the door and watched helplessly as the flames quickly engulfed the structure.

There was another 1957 Chevy Bel Air inside along with two 1955 Chevy Bel Airs.

Mrs. Kraus, who seemed numb in disbelief over the loss, said all of the now charred vehicles they took turns driving were in great shape.

"You just don't expect to lose them all, all at once," she said.

Police said the value of each car was estimated at anywhere from $20,000 to more than $100,000.

Mrs. Kraus doesn't believe any of the fire damaged cars are restorable but she'll leave that up to her insurance company to decide.

"They're all looking in pretty bad shape. I think they're all totaled. I don't know," she said.

No light was shed on what caused the generator to catch fire.

PET OF THE WEEK

SMORE

Smore is fully vaccinated, more than one-year-old, and loves fresh carrots. Carrots are his favorite snack. So far, he has not found anything that he enjoys more. However, he is fully open to trying other healthy snacks that are safe for guinea pigs. Smore likes to consider himself a relatively chill guineau pig. When humans pick him up, some guineas try to run away, but he's been content to lie in their arms and curl up to relax. He is a solo guineau pig. Smore would also be most comfortable if children were old enough to be gentle with him.

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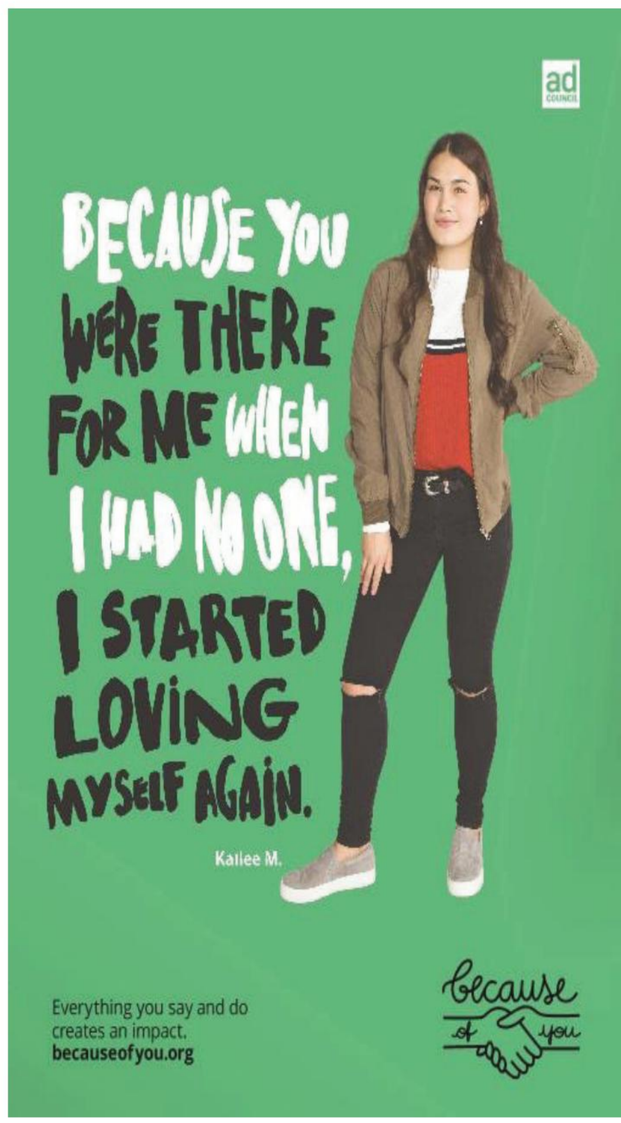
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Kaliee M.
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Community celebrated at annual Strawberry Social

BY FRANCESCA SAGALA

Visitors enjoyed a strawberry sundae on a summer Sunday, while also donating toward making the Friends of New Troy (FONT) New Troy Community Center a more expansive and vibrant gathering spot, at the Allan Boyd Memorial Strawberry Social Sunday, July 14.

The annual event, which featured an array of strawberry treats and live entertainment by Down By the Dock, is a gift to the community from the Boyd family to honor the memory of Allan Boyd (1925-2017), who grew up in New Troy and attended New Troy High School, which used to stand on the site of the current New Troy Township Park. Allan owned a garage in the center of town, as well as was township supervisor and remained a prominent figure in local politics for many years.

In 2018, the Boyd family also donated the gazebo that now is the centerpiece of the community center's gazebo garden.

Guests donated to the significant crowdfunding campaign aimed at revitalizing the exterior of the community center, improving the safety, accessibility and curb appeal.

On Monday, July 15, it was announced on the Facebook page for the Friends of New Troy (FONT) that, with pending funds the $50,000 goal has been met and FONT will be awarded a Michigan Economic Development Corporation's (MEDC) Public Spaces Community Places matching grant.

Donors are still welcome to donate through Patronicity until July 19 and have their contributions matched dollar-for-dollar, with extra funding going toward potential project overages and to upgrade elements of the Exterior Revitalization Project.

The campaign funds will be allocated to several crucial upgrades designed to enhance the safety, accessibility, and aesthetic appeal of the community center.

Victoria Petroff, president of the FONT Board of Directors, said that there'll be a new parking lot, new sidewalks, new entranceways at the front and the gym to level them out and ensure everything's ADA compliant and the metal of the center will be wrapped in a wood facade to give it a more "rustic" look.

"It's by far the largest fundraising and undertaking we've done," she said.

Petroff added that FONT was able to work with Changemaker Studio, a firm that helped them expand their fundraising by doing grant funding through the state and getting matching funds, which doubled what the nonprofit was able to do.

FONT's project will be coordinated with Weesaw Twonship's revitalization of the adjacent park, which will include a new pavilion and multi-sport court.

"We wanted to make sure we were able to do our half of the parking lot when Weesaw Township was ready to do their half of the parking lot," Petroff said.

Construction should begin soon, with certain tasks being on target to begin late this month.

Petroff said that the campaign was funded by some external sources, such as the MEDC and a Berrien Community Foundation For Good Grant (which she said will shoot them over the goal).

The rest of the donations were also received from several community members. Petroff said that Bev Kohn, wife of the late Jerry Kohn, who founded Corvette Central, gave the first donation of $40,000.

"We are the center of this area and, if you can keep that area looking nice and see people investing in it - you hope that spirit kind of ripples out into the rest of the community," Petroff said.

Down By the Dock performs at the social

Guests enjoy their strawberry sundaes under a tent

Down By the Dock performs in the gazebo

Mike Metz, Victoria Petroff and Terry Hanover celebrate meeting the goal to trasnform the community center

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